

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGER'S ROUNDTABLE WITH BRIGADIER GENERAL
DAVID PHILLIPS, DEPUTY COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE CIVILIAN POLICE
ASSISTANCE TRAINING TEAM SUBJECT: TRAINING ASSESSMENT/UPDATE OF THE
IRAQI POLICE FORCES MODERATOR: CHARLES J. "JACK" HOLT CHIEF, NEW MEDIA
OPERATIONS, OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE PUBLIC AFFAIRS
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GEN. PHILLIPS: Okay. This is Brigadier General Dave Phillips. Thanks
for the opportunity to get a chance to talk with you. I think maybe seeing from
the bio, I've been over here before. I was a brigade commander and now I'm back
over here as a deputy-commanding general to CPAT. Still working with the Iraqi
police. I'm very optimistic because of a couple of things I just witnessed in
the past few days.

Out in Al Anbar, which you know has been a difficult area about six
months ago, a total change. And when they say there is an awakening, I think
that's almost an understatement. We hired about 3,000 new Iraqi policemen --
probably 99 percent Sunni, if not 100 percent. And we're hiring 2,000
additional National Policemen from Al Anbar. We have more people signing up
than what we actually have ability to hire. And when I say "we", I'm referring
to the Iraqis. And the National Police, as you know, are a predominantly Shi'a
organization and these are predominantly Sunnis that are joining it.

Overall we've hired a little over 13,000 new Iraqi policemen in about
the past 60 days. But what really touched me was on the 23rd of October, this
past Tuesday, I went out to Ramadi. The Iraqis came up with a concept of a
Unity Day parade. Never in my wildest imagination did I ever think Ramadi would
host a parade which would be led with a band playing and then also young Iraqi
Boy Scouts marching with flags, young Iraqi Girl Scouts marching with flags,
followed by the fire department, the National Police, the regular police,
ambulances. Never dreamed I would see something like that, specifically, let
alone Ramadi. So very optimistic on that.

The other thing is we just got the Carabinieri training set. It's going
to start tomorrow. We have a 450-man battalion, which is the QRF battalion out
in the National Police. They redeployed from an operation mission in Karbala
and they're on a stand down today and tomorrow they start their training, hosted
by the Carabinieri of Italy, under the support of NATO. They're going to be
training them on a 10-week course in very specialized police skills. This is
the start of phase three of the national police professionalization -- what we
call re-gluing.

So thanks for the opportunity to talk today.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir. Sounds like some really good stuff happening out there.

Bruce, you were online first, so why don't you get us started. Oh, and I'd like to remind you guys to be sure when you -- introduce yourselves and your publication. And so let's go.

Bruce.

Q General, good afternoon. Bruce McQuain with QandO.net.

My question really has to do with, you know, you're obviously starting to have some success with the police. One of the other big things that we've seen is this concerned citizens program that has started standing up everywhere. Can you give us an idea how that's integrated with the police and how that functions?

GEN. PHILLIPS: Sure. I sure can, Bruce.

The Concerned Local Citizens was an initiatives which was down at the grassroots level of the communities who were tired of the terrorism, tired of the fact that kids couldn't play on the street, and really were very much set up like a community watch that you have in communities in the states -- only, they're a little more heavily armed. Most of them bring their own weapons with them. They will work with the Iraqi police and they will be responsible for guarding a block or a corner or some area. And they basically are auxiliaries. They help the police. They can't make arrests, but they are there as eyes and ears on the street and they provide information.

And this initiative has grown up in multiple areas. It's blossomed out in Fallujah, down in Muqdadiah, up in Diyala. We're seeing a significant amount. Well over 50,000 of these individuals are coming forward. I mean, a substantial number. Some are paid. A vast majority are not paid. They're doing it because they want to see a difference in their community.

Now, we have gone out and we're recruiting heavily from these groups to join the Iraqi police, also to join the National Police and some even into the army. But there's a great deal that don't even want to do that. They just want to support their own local community and they want to do it in that way. You may see -- I think you're going to see the Concerned Local Citizens Initiatives around for a long time and it's starting to get embraced by the Ministry of the Interior.

Q Thank you.

MR. HOLT: Okay. D.J. Elliot.

Q Yes, sir. D.J. Elliot with Long War Journal.

I was wondering, they were talking about standing up a support brigade for the National Police. How has that plan or when is it planned to be done?

GEN. PHILLIPS: I wasn't able to -- what did you say they were standing up?

Q Sort of like a support brigade for the National Police so they can deploy out of the Baghdad area.

GEN. PHILLIPS: Oh! Absolutely. Because the National Police are designed as an organization to provide internal emergency response throughout the country for anything from a major fire in a city, to a flood down south, to snow storms way up in the mountains by Dohuk. They're supposed to respond. And right now they do not have that sustainment package that you have -- that comes with a support brigade.

Well, the Iraqis have paid for the support Brigade through an FMS contract -- a foreign military sales contract -- to buy the equipment and provide the sustaining support. They have identified a commander and several of the key leaders who are already functioning as the support brigade, but they have no troops yet. It's all in the infant stage of force generating this organization. That way, when you deploy a unit such as their QRF battalion that went down to Karbala, they will now be able to bring their fuel, their own resources as opposed to having to procure that off the local economy. It's a great initiative, and again, it's being paid for totally by the Iraqis.

MR. HOLT: All right. Richard.

Q Yes. Richard Chinad (sp) at the Belmont Club.

I'm just a little curious about how you happened to choose this idea of the Carabinieri and if it has any special role within the setup of the police system.

GEN. PHILLIPS: Well, the Carabinieri and NATO wanted to support the coalition's efforts in, you know, building a democratic Iraq. And this was one of the ways in which we discussed with them something they could bring to the plate in the form of training. And the National Police of Iraq are structured very similar to the Carabinieri in Italy. The Carabinieri have nationwide authority, so do the National Police. They can deploy anywhere in the country and they're a high-end police force that can transition very rapidly to almost light infantry. And so we saw the parallels there.

And what the Carabinieri have that the National Police do not is all the specialized law enforcement skills.

And that's where we want to get the National Police too, because as the insurgency wanes, you know, the National Police are going to play a very important role in the future of this country.

Q Thank you.

GEN. PHILLIPS: Thanks.

MR. HOLT: All right. Andrew Lubin.

Q General, good afternoon. Andrew Lubin from U.S. Cavalry ON Point.

There's no doubt that the bravery of the IAs and IPs is no longer in question, but can you talk about the logistics supporting them? General Swan yesterday was indicating that the biggest -- the Achilles heel of the Iraqi operation is logistics. How are you spinning them up?

GEN. PHILLIPS: You know, that is a really good question, Andrew, because logistics is really the Achilles of all military forces and police organizations, because you have to have that lifeline of support. Fuel -- very problematic. You would be surprised in a country such as Iraq with the oil base, but benzene and diesel is rationed out to the services. We are working our systems, though.

I would say right now they have what's called a pull system to where a lower echelon unit has to reach up to the higher headquarters and justify a need for support, as opposed to the higher headquarters pushing support where they see the requirements.

It's a slow system. It's problematic. And what we have taught the Iraqis to do -- even using ammunition, for example. The higher headquarters of MOI now requires the subordinate provinces, when they request ammunition, to show a utilization. Where did the ammo go? And if they're unable to justify that, then there are some sanctions that are applied. So it causes sometimes the provinces not to want to request ammo. Such as, at the end of some of the soccer matches we've recently seen. You may call it cultural, you may call it just a lot of people that are sports fans, but some of the police actually do fire their weapons in the air. Very dangerous, but -- and they use up their ammo that way. Well, naturally -- the MOI, we have taught them you don't just issue ammo out to replenish wasted stocks. So we are trying to teach them the system. And I would say, right now, the MOI runs all of its own logistics and all its own logistics distribution. We're at the position now where we're stepped-back, and it's -- the Iraqis are doing it, we're watching and assisting where necessary.

They do also distribution of weapons, weapons accountability, ammunition, uniforms, and through FMS and some local contracts, they are purchasing a vast majority of their equipment. For the first time really -- starting this year and next year, we're even seeing a significant plus-up.

Q Okay. Great. Jack, -- (inaudible) -- get something for follow-up on that?

MR. HOLT: Sure, go ahead.

Q Okay. Sir, but a lot of logistics is -- you know, getting it in the warehouses is obviously important, but they've also got to have the forethought to get it up to the guys in the field. When some of the first surge operations started June -- July, August, September, we were hearing stories that they weren't, they hadn't -- they were having trouble getting enough bullets and beans up to the guys on the lines. Have they changed -- that's a (mine-setoff ?) problem, have they changed that or are they still (just sort of ?) into this, you know, centralized, "you-ask-for-it-and-we'll-think-about-sending-it- up-to-you" attitude?

GEN. PHILLIPS: Well, we still see a lot of times down at the station level, and at the national police -- actually, not even so much at the national police anymore, but the station level, you will go over there, visit the station and the Police Transition Team will hear, "We're so short ammo; we're so short ammo." But when we actually take a look at what the MOI have on hand, what the province has on hand, and even at times what the district has on hand -- I don't want to say it's a hoarding mentality, but they issue it out very frugally and

unfortunately the people at the user level that need it the most are usually in the shortest supply.

There is no shortage of weapons here. There is no shortage of ammunition. But I would say it's not distributed quite to where you would like to see it down at the user level. So it is problematic. We continue to work this.

General Petraeus raises the issue to us quite frequently when he's out visiting some of these police stations -- "Hey, they're telling me they have no ammo." And when we backtrack the system, there is ammo. It's just being hoarded at higher echelons. And we continue to press to get them to push that down.

Q Thank you very much. MR. HOLT: All right, thanks.

Jarred.

Q Good afternoon, this is Lieutenant Fishman. My question kind of dovetails with Andrew Lubin's a little bit. We see this tremendous progress throughout all the different provinces -- through Anbar, Diyala, down at Mahmudiyah and Baghdad, but how do we cement the progress? In other words, how do we take these localized; tie them into the regional, the district and the central government so that, you know, years from now when we're starting to pull down, it doesn't all fall apart?

GEN. PHILLIPS: Well, I believe the key factor there is it's -- it's basically the local policing. You have to be part of the organization, not necessarily working side-by-side with it. You can't have million groups out there guarding their local community, they have to join the police. And we're seeing that happen out in al Anbar, up in Diyala, to where people who were formerly shooting at us are now side-by-side with us and they're doing it through the MOI.

Now there was hesitation, you know, from the higher level of the MOI. There were some of the Shiite majority -- was looking at the Sunnis wanting to join the forces, somewhat suspect. But we see that that's slowly -- we're slowly breaking through that ice so that they're, you know, coming into to organization.

And we have no shortage of people wanting to join the police, but we also have to assist with standing-up some other viable, governmental-type jobs too to go along with that because eventually, if we have a police force so large it could be problematic in the long-run once the insurgency goes on the wane, such as it's going on the wane out in al-Anbar now with the great progress being made.

MR. HOLT: Okay. Did anybody else join us?

Okay, any follow-up questions?

Q Well, I could follow up with that then, if we have a minute. Has there been any acts of insubordination, or do the new recruits who are coming in totally follow the national Ministry of Interior, or Ministry of Police rules then?

GEN. PHILLIPS: Well, like any organization, I don't think there's an organization that I know of that doesn't have some type of dissent at lower levels, especially with new recruits coming in, but we don't see it as systematic across the population. There are those that are weeded out in training. There are those that are disciplined through internal affairs or IG investigations.

This past month there were over 400 founded IG investigations in which some type of administrative punishment was taken against individuals of the Iraqi police. So there are mechanisms in place to try to cull out the bad -- you know, the folks that are not measuring up or have problems with it. I've seen very little open dissent. It may be there but I've personally seen very little of it. And I've seen the Iraqis getting fairly aggressive with discipline.

So you're going to always going to have problems. Police -- policing is local. The police officers are going to represent their local community. They're going to work side-by-side with their same friends they grew up with -- they're going to live in the same house, their family and they will be under the same external influences. So the police will pretty much mirror the community at large.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir.

And we've just got just a couple of minutes left here, sir. Do you have any closing thoughts, closing statements?

GEN. PHILLIPS: I'd just really like to go back towards Ramadi again. I was able to do a walking patrol in Falluja and then in Ramadi this past time. I just never dreamed that we would see this type of celebration openly where people were walking on the streets with a band playing in Ramadi. I mean, that's not the Ramadi that we have all known and heard of. But in the past six months there has been such head-way made out in al-Anbar -- we're seeing a great deal of it in Diyala, some in Salahad Din, and a lot of the other areas.

When I sat there at the Ramadi parade, that evening I contacted my wife and told her that for one of the first times in a long time, I was very optimistic. In the past, I was cautiously optimistic and -- (inaudible) --, but what I saw at Ramadi, to me, that was one of those days to where you realized you are witnessing something extremely special. And I believe that parade -- when the history of OIF is written, that parade's going to be mentioned as one of the -- a very key event.

It may have been very low key at the time, but I think it's going to have long-lasting impact. I mean, with little kids leading a parade in Ramadi? I never would have dreamed of kids being on the streets of Ramadi six months ago.

So thanks a lot for the opportunity to talk to all of you. I really appreciate it and look forward to an opportunity sometime in the future.

Q Thank you.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir. Thank you very much.

Brigadier General David Philips, deputy commanding general of the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team out of Baghdad. Thank you very much

for joining us, sir. And we do look forward to speaking with you again. Great news, sir. Thank you. GEN. PHILLIPS: Thank you.

END.